

## Recreation area named for former senator

March 18, 2006

*Associated Press*

MONTPELIER — A 22,758-acre tract of recreation land in Rutland and Bennington counties will be named to honor former U.S. Sen. Robert Stafford, R-Vt.

The Senate unanimously approved the legislation Thursday night and the House is expected to do the same.

The recreation area will be known as "The Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area." The land was designated a national recreation area in the 1984 Wilderness Act, which Stafford helped to write.

"Bob Stafford's legacy is enduring, and this is an enduring and meaningful way to commemorate his work and his love of Vermont," said Sen. Patrick Leahy. "White Rocks is among his most beloved natural areas in our state, and we know that he and Helen could actually see the towering white cliff face of White Rocks Mountain from their home. This will remind generations of future Vermonters of Bob Stafford's towering achievements, and of the humanity of his spirit."

U.S. Sen. James Jeffords, who holds Stafford's seat, said "no monument or park renaming can do justice to the unparalleled contributions that Senator Stafford made to both Vermont and this nation.

"That said, naming the White Rocks area after Senator Stafford is as fitting a tribute as I can imagine for a man who did so much to protect Vermont's natural resources and beauty," said Jeffords, who is retiring at the end of this year.

U.S. Rep. Bernie Sanders called Stafford "a national leader on so many issues, including education, the environment, and human rights."

Leahy, in a statement on the Senate floor, called Stafford "an absolute giant in Vermont politics."

Stafford, a Republican, was elected to the U.S. House in 1960 and was appointed to the Senate in 1971, where he served until 1989.